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ARMENIAN WRITERS AND THE GENOCIDE

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The Theme of the Armenian Genocide in Diaspora Prose

Vahé Oshagan

THE Armenian Diaspora and its peculiar mentality have existed since the end of the Bagratuni Kingdom in Greater Armenia in the eleventh century, but in this paper the word Diaspora refers to the dispersion of one million survivors and refugees, who escaped the Genocide of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire to the Arab countries of the Middle East, to Europe, and to the Western hemisphere. The most important concentration was in Syria and Lebanon, which counted close to 200,000 refugees. Second was France, slightly less in number but with a greater cultural potential. The communities in the United States swelled, numbering perhaps some 50,000, made up mainly of blue-collar workers.

When the Armenians settled in these areas, they found elements of a cultural infrastructure which emigrants before them, fleeing Persian and Ottoman repression during the preceding centuries, had already put into place. These consisted generally of printing presses, newspapers, churches and schools, and sometimes a petty intelligentsia. What they did not find, however, was a lively literary tradition or literary elites. Thus, a young writer in 1925 in France, Lebanon, or the United States would have to rely mainly on himself and make the most of his haphazard education, of his random and insignificant readings, and of his poor knowledge of the language. Furthermore, during the first decades, the energies of the Diaspora were engaged either in the painful effort of survival or in bitter factional disputes. Self-expression or independent writing were not encouraged. Finally, a wide-spread feeling of bitterness against the so-called establishment or entrenched leadership neutralized any kind of positive influence that the handful of middle-aged Diaspora writers who had survived the massacres could have had on the young generations.

The theme of the harrowing experiences of the massacres did not materialize directly in the first generation of writers who were mostly versifiers; these experiences were expressed in the form of personal memoirs without any literary pretension. These started to appear as early as 1919 and within five years 11 titles had been published.¹ Many others printed episodes and short narratives of their terrifying experiences in the periodic press while others resorted to writing tales and short-stories of suffering full of pathos and flights of imagination.² All this makes for a literature of escape but hardly one where the Genocide figures as a major literary theme.

Escape into the unreal, the dream-world, was not new in Armenian letters. Centuries of repression had made a controlled, positive approach to reality extremely difficult. But now there was the added sense of being rejected by the hostile world and haunted by the macabre dimensions of the tragedy which defied reason and language. This inability of self-expression had the effect of imprisoning the

¹Bishop K. Balakian, *Hai koghkotan* [The Armenian golgotha], Vienna, 1922; S. Boghosian, *Dkhour trvakner* [Sad episodes], Cairo, 1919; B. Donabedian, *Tsain darabelots* [The voice of the tormented], Paris, 1922; P. Kapdanian, *Tsavag*, New York, 1922; G. Kapigian, *Eghernabadum* [The universe of the Holocaust], Jerusalem, 1924; O. Mahdesian, *Arumi jampen* [From the path of blood], Cairo, 1919; Y. Mesiayan, *Arunod hasger* [Harvest of blood], Boston, 1922; V. Piranian, *Trvakner pakhsdagan gianke* [Episodes from a fugitive life], Boston, 1924; V. Chukasezian, *Tseghis koghkotan* [The golgotha of my race], Boston, 1923; E. Voskeritchian, *Darabanki orezen* [From the days of suffering], Aleppo, 1924; S. Eremian, *Merelneru garavane* [The caravan of the dead], Venice, 1921.

²Here is a partial list of the books on the massacres in general up to the 1970's: A. Anoush, *Airvads kaghaki me badmutiune* [The story of a burnt city], Aleppo, 1948; A. Anoush, *Arian janabarhov*, [Along paths of blood], Aleppo, 1959; H. Aramian, *Haiots danteagan*, [The inferno of the Armenians], Beirut, 1970; H. Asadurian, *Hovagimi tornere* [The grandsons of Hovagim], New York, 1965; H. Avakian, *Aisbes abretsank* [How we lived], New York, 1930; H. Avedisian, *Badmvdaskner* [Stories], Beirut, 1930; B. Badirian, *La troublante odyssée d'un caravan*, [The troubling odyssey of a caravan], Los Angeles, 1926; N. Baliozian, *Tsain me antsialen* [A voice from the past], New York, 1927; A. Bozajian, *Arian tsaine* [The voice of blood], Beirut, 1948; A. Daderian, *Kerezmannerun mechen* [In the midst of tombs], New York, 1945; M. Der Alexanian, *When I was a Boy in Armenia*, Boston, 1927; N. Der Hagopian, *Out of the Inferno*, Philadelphia, 1949; A. Dirazan, *Arun ev dsaghigner* [Blood and flowers], Constantinople, 1928; V. Donabedian, *Vshdi tsolker* [Gleams of grief], Beirut, 1925; A. Dzarugian, *Mangutiun chounetsogh martig* [Men without childhood], Beirut, 1955; M. Esmerian, *Aksori ev baderazmi gragnerun mechen* [Through the fires of deportation and war], Constantinople, 1952; E. Hagopian-Taft, *A Rebirth*, New York, 1940; A. Haigaz, *Tseghin tsaine* [The voice of the race], New York, vol. I, 1949 and vol. II, 1955; B. Hrair, *Anabadi hokiner* [Souls of the desert], Boston, 1926; M. Ishkhan, *Hatsi ev luysi hamar* [For bread and light], Beirut, 1951; M. Ishkhan, *Hatsi ev siro hamar* [For bread and love], Beirut, 1956; A. Kalchian, *Garmir trvakner herosneru gianken* [Red episodes from heroes' lives], Bucharest, vol. I, 1938 and vol. II, 1939; A. Kevonian, *Guluzar*, Paris, 1946; H. Kurkjian, *Arunod anabad* [Blood-drenched desert], Boston, 1949; G. Lulejian, *Hasgakagh* [Excerpts], Fresno, 1955; H. Mahdesian, *Husher ev huyzer* [Memories and feelings], Marseille, 1930; Gh. Mangunts, *Drabizoni hayots degghanutiune* [The deportation of the Armenians of Drabizon], Tehran, 1963; N. Manugian, *Veratarts tebi haireni dun* [Return to the native home], Beirut, 1973; K. Melidineti, *Nakhjirner* [Scenes of carnage], Boston,

Armenians more and more in their pain, their obsessive mood of dereliction. The psychological effects of the Genocide were detrimental to literature and the first decades of the Diaspora were a period of disarray and sterility. For the traumatized, penniless survivors, young and old, the world had shrunk to the dimensions of their forlorn existences. Widespread intolerance, bigotry, incipient hatreds, and ultra-conservatism that reigned in the Armenian masses inhibited the emergence of new, youthful voices in literature while a tradition of sorts carried over from the pre-Genocide times was kept alive by the few writers of the older generation struggling to make a living in the Diaspora.³

Two major prose-forms are practiced — the short story and the novel. The impact of the massacres on the short story was devastating. The genre had come of age in the 1880's, inspired largely from French realist literature. Within 30 years, a large readership had been formed and the short story had become, next to lyrical poetry, the most convenient and popular vehicle for Armenian literary sensibility. It was the staple literary piece of the periodical press. Around 1914, there were six dailies, 18 weeklies and monthlies, and 10 almanacs published in Constantinople alone and each of these publications had, besides the editor, an accredited translator of western literature and its short story writer. One can imagine then the place the short story occupied in the life of letters at the time.

It must be said that the mass of the Armenians and their elites were caught by surprise by the massacres, despite ominous precedents in 1862, 1894-1896, and 1909. The year 1915 thus found the literati going about its business in all tranquility. But ten years later, in 1925, all

1929; G. Muradian, *Mahabardi me hushere* [Memories of a death-row convict], Paris, 1942; A. Nakkashian, *A Man who Found a Country*, New York, 1940; S. Panossian, *Anartsakank kayler* [Steps without echo], Aleppo, 1949; N. Piranian, *Kharperti Egherne* [The Holocaust in Kharpert], Boston, 1937; S. Sagherian, *Gisataryan hushamadian* [Memories of half a century], Paris, 1948; A. Sahagian, *Pandi ashkharen* [From the world of prison], Beirut, 1930; Y. Shahnazar, *Baghdadi garavane* [The caravan of Bagdad], Constantinople, 1937; G. Sidal, *Kisheran minchev lusapats* [From night to dawn] Philadelphia, 1931; R. Takvorian, *Arun ev avun* [Blood and sap], Venice, 1927; Taparagan (Halajian), *Tebi gakhaghan* [To the gallows], Boston, 1932; H. Tavitian, *Jagadakir* [Destiny], Boston, 1945; Kh. Tavitian, *Giankis kirke* [The book of my life], Fresno, 1967; A. Torian, *Mangutiunes arants karuni* [My childhood without spring], Beirut, 1975.

There are some books about which there is only incomplete bibliographical information, such as: Araxia, *Suki dariner* [Years of mourning]; P. Bozajian, *Changherii panden* [From the prison of Changheri]; A. Badrig, *Ardsvige* [The young eagle], 1968; M. Salpi, *Mer khache* [Our cross]; K. Sarkis, *Journey to the Light*, 1965; Z. Tarian, *Ardzvi Vasburagan* [The eagle of Vasburagan].

³Studying the experiences of European Jewry during the Second World War, both R.J. Lifton and J. Lemkin have stressed the stultifying effects of extreme cruelty and suffering on human psychology. The case of the Armenians during the First World War fits the model exactly. Others have studied how authoritarianism is reinforced in oppressed societies (T.W. Adorno et. al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York, 1950). This too fits the Armenian case.

this was changed. Almost the entire intelligentsia, urban and rural, had been wiped out and the short story had become an insignificant element of the literary scene. The genre also suffered from its innate insufficiency as a mode of expression of powerful sustained feeling. Its limited format allowed only artless narratives of isolated personal experiences during the deportations and the subsequent orphanage life. Perhaps that was the reason why in the 1920's many of the more important writers such as Hagop Mentsuri, Vahé Hayg, Arsen Ergat, Hagop Oshagan, and Hamasdegh chose to avoid the theme of the massacres in their short stories and wrote about village life, idyllic pastoral settings of their childhood worlds. Meanwhile secondary prose-writers such as Hovannes Asbed, Vahan Harutiunian, Zakar Masisian, Sdepan Shahbaz, H. Antreasian produced tales of suffering full of agonizing pathos but little else; here the sense of art and tragedy are absent, except in the case of some gifted writers who had managed to escape or survive the carnage. One such writer was Suren Barteavian whose stories published in a book entitled *Arunin madyane* (The book of blood) in Cairo in 1920 paint a poignant picture of the victims as well as the survivors of the Turkish massacres. But his primary interest lay in journalism which he practiced with great verve and aggressiveness to the detriment of his literary work.

The Genocide as a literary theme fared even worse with the satirist Ervant Odian. He was one of the rare Armenians to opt for a Turkish identity to save his life yet he went on to serialize in a paper his memoirs of the deportation under the title *Anidsial dariner, 1914-1918* (Accursed years), published in 1918. Unfortunately, it is only a long series of scenes of violence and horror which in Hagop Oshagan's view hardly ever attain the level of artistic accomplishment.⁴

Another intellectual of note, Mikael Shamdanjian, wrote his memoirs of the 1915 deportations under the title of *Hai mdki hargue Eghernin* (What the Massacres cost the Armenian intellect) but its literary value is minimal.

Finally, Zabel Esayan the novelist addressed the Genocide, but only in a marginal way. In effect, her masterful treatment of the theme of man's inhumanity to man in her famous book *Averagnerun mech* (Among the ruins) published in Constantinople in 1911 is concerned only with the 1909 massacre in Adana, though it remains perhaps the best of its kind in Armenian letters, according to Hagop Oshagan. The 1915 Genocide inspired her only work of memoirs *Zhoghovurti me hokevarke* (The agony of a people) which she published in 1917 in the journal *Kords* (Baku). Her other work on the same theme *Muradi jamportutiune* (The travels of Murad) appeared in the same paper, in a serialized form, during the same year. Even the generation of talented,

⁴H. Oshagan, *Hamabadger arevmdahay kraganutian* [Panorama of Western Armenian literature], vol. XIII, (Antelias: Armenian Catholicossate Press, 1980), p. 429.

new writers that emerges from the youth in Paris (Shavarsh Nartuni, Vazken Shushanian, Neshan Beshigtashlian, Meruzhan Barsamian, and others) is overwhelmed by the emotional force of the tragedy and most of them take refuge in a literature of sentimentality and sense experiences of a vague, anodyne nature.

Everywhere, the Armenians are dazed by the catastrophe, unable to adapt to the new surroundings, with no roots in the past, no future to look forward to. Creative literary life is almost at a standstill and trivial issues seem to preoccupy the literati above all else — the sorry plight of the writers or the hope of recreating an ethnic literature in the Diaspora which amounts to no less than turning the clock back, refusing to accept the factual reality of the massacres and the Diaspora.

The annals of the 1920's report only random public lectures in Cairo, Paris, or Boston. There is no center, no direction or authority in the intellectual life of the one million Armenians in the Diaspora. The publications, too, have decreased dramatically. While in the five years following the Young Turk Revolution in Turkey (1909-1914) the presses in Constantinople and Smyrna published 141 works of literary value, the entire Diaspora from 1920 to 1930, produced only 142 works. In terms of purely literary value of these writings, we notice a strange phenomenon — there is hardly any difference between pre-massacre and post-massacre writing until the end of the Second World War. It is still the same literature of flight from reality, of day-dreams, and of neo-romantic musings, the dominant themes being the need for security, affection, and escape into the ideal. The senses are numb to the world. Creativity is but a repetition of the past. The Armenian intellect is turning in circles, trying to avoid the terrible theme of the Genocide.

One book, however, deserves special attention as it deals directly and exclusively with the theme of the Genocide, although it is neither a short story nor a novel. It is Aram Andonian's *Ain sev orerun* (In those dark days . . .) published by Hairenik Press in Boston in 1919. This small volume of approximately 200 pages, written in 1917, contains six narratives the author calls "badger" or scenes but they are really eyewitness accounts of real-life events in a deportee camp near the banks of the river Euphrates. Andonian is not a major figure in Armenian letters but with this book he has succeeded in giving such a gripping description of human cruelty and suffering with so much emotion and such immediacy that Hagop Oshagan considers the book to be the only and the best work written on the Genocide. "It is one of the summits of our achievement," he says.⁵ These stories of heart-rending pain, whose victims are all helpless and innocent children and women, border on the inhuman and are often of such poignancy that

⁵*Ibid.*, vol. IX, p. 255.

the mind will refuse to accept them. Beyond this point of refusal, the theme breaks down. But Andonian never pushes his descriptions to their limit. And the book succeeds where plays, novels, short stories, or simple memoirs had failed and raises the corner of the curtain on one little scene of the immense tragedy of 1915. This is the high-water mark of the theme and it should not come as a surprise that the psychological portrait of the Turk occupies a very small place in Andonian's scenes of Hell, or in Armenian letters for that matter. In this he remains true to the national tradition, for in spite of all the pain they endured at the hands of their enemies, the Armenians never understood or wrote about them. That is one reason why the theme never took off or developed through the decades. Aram Andonian has written another book on the Genocide entitled *Meds vojire* (The great crime) that is more factual and compliments the message of the first. Andonian is also the author of a widely-known book entitled *Official Documents concerning the Armenian Massacres* and of the celebrated *The Memoirs of Naim Bey*, Turkish official documents relating to the deportations and massacres of Armenians, with an introduction by Viscount Gladstone, both published in 1920 in London.

The novel had never seriously tempted the West Armenians and they were satisfied by the hundreds of translations from foreign, especially French, literature. During the 70 years between the Revival and 1915, West Armenians produced about 130 works of fiction. From this number, though, only four novels could satisfy some of the requirements of the genre: Vartan Pasha's *Akabi* (Constantinople, 1851); Srpuhi Dusap's *Maida* (Constantinople, 1883); Dikran Gamsaragan's *Varzhabedin aghchige* (The Schoolteacher's Daughter), Constantinople, 1888; and Eroukhan's *Amirayin aghchige* (The amira's daughter), Constantinople, 1905. This is one of the reasons why the experience of the Genocide did not become a theme, creating another cause for frustration in the Armenian psyche where the horror has remained in its raw, brutal form to haunt the creative imagination right up to our days.

Toward the end of the first decade, however, there is a change. In 1928 Hagop Oshagan the novelist made his entry into Armenian letters with his novel *Dsag bedouge* (The adulterous woman), published in *Hairenik Amsakir* of Boston. In the following six years, he was to publish five more volumes of fiction, including his roman-fleuve *Mnatsortats*. These novels were striking by their astonishing vitality and originality of style, their masterful technique and accomplished art. They were all cast in the Armenian countryside of the period 1890-1915 and portray the clash of the Turkish and Armenian philosophies of life against a backdrop of the widespread Hamidian massacres of 1894-1896. These novels stop short of 1915 but they prepare the literary terrain for the next step of Oshagan's vast fictional

project — the massacres of 1915-1923. But he died before he could write this final volume about the life and death struggle of the two nations. One of the major themes of *Mnatsortats* is precisely this incompatibility of the Armenian and Turkish natures, especially after the former have attained self-consciousness and self-respect. In other words, it is the theme of the inevitability of the Genocide.⁶ For Oshagan, this theme is played out between the atavistic drives for blood and sadistic pleasure of destruction that is at the core of the Turkish psyche and the equally instinctive mystic of toil, suffering, and blind faith that has kept the Armenians going. In notes prepared for his third volume of *Mnatsortats* to be entitled *Hell* and destined to run to five volumes of 300 pages each, it is clear that Oshagan planned to use the theme of the Genocide for several aims:

a) to describe in detail the deportations and the massacres which is, according to him, "a chaos of a thousand volumes," on the scale of Leo Tolstoi's *War and Peace*;

b) to present the Armenian spirit and the Armenian vision of the world;

c) to draw a large and detailed picture of the Turkish mind and psyche and show it in its conflict with the Armenian mind.

Thus, though not directly involved with the 1915 genocide, these novels bore the powerful impact of the 1894-1896 massacres that were in reality the preparatory moves toward the final solution of the Armenian Question. The difference lies in the scale only: 300,000 killed in the 1894-1896 period and 1.5 million killed in the genocide of 1915-1923. For Oshagan, although the theme defies human effort and rational forces, it can still give birth to a masterpiece. "Our literature," says Oshagan, "will have nothing so national, so powerful and so stimulating as the novel that will be written about 1915." This rather optimistic attitude toward the future was not borne out by facts and the only reason Oshagan himself did not write the novel of the Genocide, but put it off for 15 years, was his fear that his heart might not resist the shock of a visit to the site of the massacres. And that was exactly what happened.

In a sense, all Diaspora literature written since 1915 bears some relation to the Genocide. The Armenians, an essentially rural, self-centered nation living under great stress in a theocratic and backward society, had been violently uprooted from their homes, thrown into hell, cut to pieces, and forced overnight to adapt themselves to a modern, urban, and democratic civilization. Their literature reflects this violent culture shock, this traumatic and sudden experience. This is evident in their excessive nationalism and love of pathos, their rhetorical tendencies that in fact erect language as a bulwark for sur-

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 291 (n).

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 283.

vival, their desire to moralize, and their aversion to innovation. Apart from Oshagan, West Armenian literature counts only six other novelists of value until the 1960's. All six novelists manifest these characteristics and their novels turn around the nightmare of the Genocide, around the unsaid and the ineffable. In the final analysis, the horrible fact of the Genocide, whether present or absent from the novel, is the one major theme to which all else refers in some way or other.

The first among these novelists was Shahan Shahnur, who wrote *Nahanje arants erki* (Retreat without Glory) published serially in the Paris daily *Haratch* in 1928. A first and last novel by an orphan of the massacres born in Constantinople, the book highlights the demoralization, the bitterness, and the isolation of most Armenians in Europe at the time. Its main theme, built upon this mood, centers around the feelings of inability to accept the world as it is with all the frustrations that this engenders, and the rejection of some of the major elements of the cultural heritage. It was an instinctive refusal to come to terms with the way of life around them and contrasts sharply with their equally irresistible hunger for love, and it is not difficult to see there a direct effect of their deprivation of affection that is typical of the entire generation. And that too, is a dominant theme of the literary production of the epoch. This revolt against the civilizations of both the East and the West by a totally disillusioned generation was a direct result of the massacres. Shahnur's short stories and other prose works reinforced this theme of Exile while other writers, notably Shavarsh Nartuni, developed the theoretical side of the feeling. For these talented young men, Armenians were not only outcasts from mankind and history, but they themselves felt outcast from the Armenian nation. The rejection of their history meant also for these writers the refusal to treat the Genocide directly as a literary theme.

A second novel, *Mer gianke* (Our life) was written in 1934 by Hrach Zartarian, again in Paris. It is much less violent in its denunciation and anger and centers on the rootlessness of generations and their conflicts set against a cosmopolitan background. Here again, the Genocide is not described or recreated imaginatively but it is present negatively, as the root and cause of all the suffering Armenians have to go through in their new homeland. Like some dark, mysterious region, the massacres are there and they limit the existence of the young men in space and time; the heroes have no history of their own, no loyalties and no ideals. They are all destructive in their attachments, poisoned by a sense of powerlessness to control their destiny, to react to their milieu, or to understand each other.

Zareh Vorpuni is another prose writer from France. His novel, *Portse* (The trial), published in 1929, is a narrative of the psychological entanglements of Armenians in foreign lands and the hardships they

faced trying to make a living in contemporary France. The effects of the Genocide are everywhere — in the death of the father at the hands of the Turks, in the utter misery of the family, the attempted suicide, etc. One by one, all the heroes of Vorpuni succumb before the trials of life.

This tale of failure and despair is repeated in another novel *Arev, arev* (Sun, oh sun. . .) written by Pailag Mikaelian and published in Paris in 1933. From his bed in a Swiss sanatorium, the hero echoes the feelings of the entire generation when he says, "I have no respect for your bones, oh my kind and dear father, you preferred to bow before the enemy rather than revolt, you chose to be cunning but not daring, to smile when you had to curse, to pile up money when you had to sacrifice it . . ." ⁸ All these novels, and others as well, tell a story of defeat, describe the pathetic lives of misfits who try to justify their failure by referring to the Genocide which, like some fatality, casts its long shadow in their souls and on their lives. One has the impression that the inability of these writers to create positive and powerful heroes and novels capable of counteracting the effects of the massacres means that, as far as they were concerned, the murder of the nation was continuing. They themselves were the living theme of the Genocide.

The next novel comes from the United States. It is called *Sbidag tsiavore* (The white horseman) and is written by the short story writer Hamasdegh. It too appeared in serial form in Boston in 1931. The action is set in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It is a part-historical and part-imaginary novel about Ottoman atrocities and the birth of the Armenian resistance and the exploits of its heroic figures. It has a very indirect bearing on the theme of the genocidal plan and its effects on the Armenian spirit.

Closer to the theme of Genocide is the novel of Gosdan Zarian, *Nave leran vra* (The ship on the mountain), published in Boston in 1943. The action takes place in war-torn Armenia during the brief period of the independent Republic of Armenia (1918 to 1920) and describes in powerful style and in great detail the terrible sufferings of the population in the aftermath of the Turkish invasion. For Zarian, the inferior Turks and their vile plans are but instruments in the hands of Providence intended to test and to temper the Armenians who are a chosen nation and have a higher destiny to accomplish. In the cosmic setting imagined by Zarian for this novel, the theme of the Genocide almost loses its moral connotation and its particular meaning to become a simple fact of nature.

Seventy years after the event, the Genocide has still not been tackled

⁸Quoted by K. Sevan, *Spurkahay kraganoutian badmutian urvakdser* [Outline of the history of diaspora literature], Erevan, 1980, p. 145.

by any author of note. The Armenians have not recovered from the trauma and with nothing forgotten and nothing forgiven, the Genocide is still continuing. As long as the Turk is identified with the principle of evil in the Armenian imagination, and as long as the Turkish government refuses to admit its guilt and make amends to the victims, the Genocide will continue and will prevent the Armenians from producing any work of art from the theme. After the Second World War, the Genocide entered the arsenal and the vocabulary of political conflicts with mixed consequences. On the negative side, we must mention the optimism that prevails today regarding a so-called revival of Armenian creative energies. Nothing warrants such an attitude. More serious is the fact, mentioned a while ago of the Turk being typified as "inhuman" not only by the mass of the people but by the literati. It is this characterization that incapacitates the creative powers of the Armenians, just as the denial of the historic and human truth poisons the entire Turkish intelligentsia.

Armenians still have to realize how and why surviving a Genocide is a privileged experience, that the trek to Hell and back gives them a wisdom that few other nations have had. Until they extract this message for all peoples and express it through art, the theme of one of the greatest crimes of the twentieth century will not reveal its secrets. ■

Editor's Note: The transliteration system used in this article is based on the phonetic value of Western Armenian.